








# Support Worker Guide - Unauthorised Restrictive Practices (URPs)



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# 1. Support Worker Guide- Unauthorised Restrictive Practices (URPs) in the NDIS

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## 1. What Are Restrictive Practices?

Restrictive practices are actions that **limit a participant’s rights, choices, or freedom of movement.**




They should only ever be used as a **last resort**, to prevent harm, and **must be authorised** in a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP).

The 5 types are:

1. **Seclusion** – isolating someone in a space they cannot leave.
  2. **Chemical restraint** – using medication to control behaviour.
  3. **Mechanical restraint** – using devices to restrict movement.
  4. **Physical restraint** – staff physically holding or stopping movement.
  5. **Environmental restraint** – restricting access to areas/items (e.g., locking food or doors).
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## 2. What Are *Unauthorised* Restrictive Practices?

A restrictive practice is **unauthorised** if:

-  It is **not written in the BSP**
  -  It has **not been formally approved** by the relevant state/territory body
  -  It is used **differently from the BSP** (wrong time, wrong duration, wrong reason)
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## 3. Examples of Unauthorised Restrictive Practices

### **Seclusion**

- Locking a participant in their bedroom for “quiet time” without BSP approval

- Preventing a participant from leaving the house because they “might get lost”

 **Chemical Restraint**

- Giving extra anxiety medication to calm behaviour without doctor’s order or BSP approval
- Sedating a participant at night because they are restless and staff want rest

 **Mechanical Restraint**

- Using bed rails without BSP approval
- Putting a participant in a wheelchair with the brakes locked to stop movement when not required for safety

 **Physical Restraint**

- Staff holding a participant’s arms during a meltdown to stop them moving, without it being authorised
- Blocking a doorway with your body to stop a participant leaving

 **Environmental Restraint**

- Locking the kitchen to stop a participant eating too much, without BSP approval
- Hiding personal belongings (phone, TV remote) to control behaviour

## 4. 🕒 When to Report

Situation	Reporting Requirement	Example
<b>Unauthorised restrictive practice – no harm</b>	Report to NDIS Commission within <b>5 business days</b>	Staff locks fridge to control snacking, participant not harmed
<b>Unauthorised restrictive practice – with harm or serious risk</b>	Report within <b>24 hours</b>	Participant bruised when held down during behaviour episode

 **Support workers must always tell their supervisor immediately.**

## 5. How to Report

### 1. **Ensure Safety First**

- Stop the unauthorised practice
- Check participant's wellbeing

### 2. **Notify Supervisor**

- Report the incident as soon as possible

### 3. **Document the Facts**

- Date, time, place
- What happened
- Who was involved
- Participant's response and outcome

### 4. **NDIS Commission Notification**

- Manager/provider submits report to NDIS Commission
  - You may be asked for a statement
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## 6. Support Worker Responsibilities

- Know each participant's **Behaviour Support Plan (BSP)**
  - Always try **positive behaviour support** before restraint
  - **Never use restraint for punishment, control, or staff convenience**
  - **Report all unauthorised practices**, even if another staff member used them
  - Remember: **you are legally protected when reporting in good faith**
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## 7. Quick Checklist

- Is the practice in the BSP?
- Has it been authorised by the relevant body?

- Was it used exactly as approved?
  - If not → **Report it**
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## 8. Key Takeaway

**Unauthorised restrictive practices are a serious breach of human rights and NDIS rules.**

Your role is to:

 **Avoid them, prevent them, and report them every single time.**



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## 2. Support Worker Quiz- Authorised or Unauthorised Restrictive Practice?

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### Instructions:


Read each scenario carefully. Decide whether the restrictive practice is:

- **Authorised**  (in the participant's Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) and approved),  
or
  - **Unauthorised**  (not in BSP, not approved, or used incorrectly).
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## Scenario 1

Sam becomes agitated at the shopping centre. A staff member holds both of Sam's arms tightly to stop him from running outside. There is **no BSP** authorising physical restraint.

 Is this authorised or unauthorised?

**Answer:**  *Unauthorised physical restraint* – not in BSP.

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## Scenario 2

Maria's BSP states that, during medical appointments, she can be given a small dose of medication to help her remain calm. At her doctor's visit, staff administer the prescribed medication as outlined in the BSP.

👉 Authorised or unauthorised?

**Answer:**  *Authorised chemical restraint* – used exactly as written in BSP.

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## Scenario 3

A fridge in the group home is locked because staff believe participants are eating too much junk food. There is **no BSP or approval** for this restriction.

👉 Authorised or unauthorised?

**Answer:**  *Unauthorised environmental restraint* – fridge locked without approval.

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## Scenario 4

David's BSP authorises the use of bed rails at night due to a risk of falling. Staff put the bed rails up as per the BSP.

👉 Authorised or unauthorised?

**Answer:**  *Authorised mechanical restraint* – approved and used correctly.

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## Scenario 5

During a behaviour outburst, a staff member locks Sophie in her bedroom for 15 minutes so she can "calm down." This is **not in her BSP**.

👉 Authorised or unauthorised?

**Answer:**  *Unauthorised seclusion* – not authorised, not allowed.

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## Scenario 6

Liam’s BSP states that staff may block the doorway using their body if he attempts to run onto a busy road. One day, Liam runs toward the gate, and staff use this approved strategy.

👉 Authorised or unauthorised?

**Answer:**  *Authorised physical restraint* – part of the BSP, used to prevent serious harm.

## Scenario 7

To manage behaviours in the group home, staff give an extra dose of medication at night, even though it is **not prescribed** and not in the BSP.

👉 Authorised or unauthorised?

**Answer:**  *Unauthorised chemical restraint* – unsafe and reportable.

### Reporting Reminder for Support Workers

#### Type of Incident

#### Timeline

Unauthorised practice **with harm or serious risk** Report within **24 hours**

Unauthorised practice **without harm**

Report within **5 business days**

**If you are in doubt, please call your line manager asap.**

#### Disclaimer:

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